

Sharon Griffith Stern MD
179 Franklin Drive
Doylestown, Ohio 44230

January 1, 2008

Honorable Judge Kathleen McDonald O'Malley
Carl B. Stokes United States Courthouse
801 West Superior Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1840

Dear Judge O'Malley:

I write to you today as just a mom. You will be presiding over my son, Evan Stern's, hearing on January 18, and I am grateful for the opportunity to share with you a few observations and thoughts of just the mom. You are well aware of the facts of Evan's legal situation. What you don't know are the personal facts, and I appreciate the chance to share them in writing.

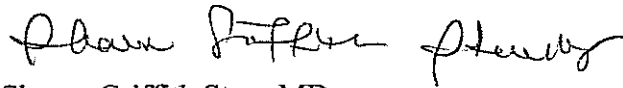
Evan was a sweet, happy go lucky child whom everybody loved. He was gentle and kind and very engaging. Then came the teen years and a sullenness and withdrawal took place. In retrospect, this occurred after a few years in private school. Unknown to either myself or his father, he was rather badly harassed and bullied there. His isolation was at it's worst once entering college. A mother knows when something is wrong. When there is a break in relationship amongst people who love you and try to protect you, there is usually a secret being kept; often a very ugly secret. In October of 2005, I suddenly knew what it was that had broken my fellowship with my son for the past several years. While I still have difficulty understanding what has happened, I am at least glad to have the truth in the open, as I am best at working through problems and coming up with solutions. I'm a fixer.

Evan was never good at lying and I now understand his behavior. He was ashamed and guilt ridden and needed help, but didn't know how to go about it. This isn't something that our society accepts and he knew of nowhere to go anonymously for help. He could have easily refused the federal agents access to his dwelling and destroyed evidence while they obtained a search warrant, but he didn't. He wanted this part of his life to end and he immediately admitted guilt, turned over the evidence, packed a suitcase, told his bride to be the truth (and had his ring returned) and came home and stayed with us until June of 2007. He immediately went into counseling, submitted to the authority of living in his parent's home with rules, accountability, and agreement that his computer activities would be monitored routinely. He managed to remain in college and complete his degree without a delay, continued to work as a co-op as a computer engineer, and graduated from college and was taken on as a full-time employee upon graduation. Those two years were tough. He had lost his independence, lost his wife to be, and was petrified of the legal consequences. He was remorseful, repentant, and found strength and acceptance through his family, counselors, and a spiritual awakening that brought him to a mature faith in God and the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He engaged responsibly in his counseling with his therapist and over time, consultation with his attorney led us all to believe that enough time had passed that any action would have already taken place. Mr. Campbell had inquired on several occasions regarding Evan's case and had been repeatedly told it was inactive. He felt free to look for his dream job which materialized in Chicago last June. His therapist, clergy, friends and family all felt that he had worked very sincerely and effectively to move on in his life. He knew where to engage in ongoing counseling and support and it was time to move on with his life away from mom and dad.

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What a shock for all of us to have but a few weeks later the first plea agreement arrive and realize the severity of the situation. As you can imagine, our entire family went into a tailspin and Evan needed to leave his new job (briefly) and return home for some serious consolation, emotional support and legal counsel. I am so proud of his behavior the past 6 months. He has pulled himself together, returned to work, been transparent with his employers regarding his legal situation, and done his best to continue to engage in counseling in Chicago and psychiatric care to continue to treat his long standing depression and additional anxiety created by this situation. Clearly, his employers are equally impressed with him, as they have agreed to continue to employ him as long as he is physically able to walk through the doors of the office each day. He has done his best to be responsible to his employer and to deal with this situation in as mature and appropriate a fashion he can. I am immensely proud of his courage, honesty, and willingness to take ownership of his failures, while at the same time to not allow the past to determine who he is now and will be in the future. My happy little boy has emerged into this stage of his life as a strong young adult who has a wonderful life ahead of himself, given the opportunity to be a part of the solution, rather than the problem. I thank you for listening to a mom's heart,

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Griffith Stern MD", written in a cursive style.

Sharon Griffith Stern MD